

HEALTH COMMITTEE special meeting of May 31, 2000**Minutes**

A special meeting of the Health Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Media Room, First Floor of the H. Lee Dennison Building, Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge, New York, on May 31, 2000, at 4:00 P.M., to discuss the matter of the Capital Budget.

Members Present:

Legislator Ginny Fields - Chairperson
 Legislator Michael Caracciolo
 Legislator Joseph Caracappa

Members Not Present:

Legislator Brian Foley - Vice-Chair
 Legislator Andrew Crecca

Also in Attendance:

Mary Skiber - Aide to Legislator Fields
 Linda Bay - Aide to Presiding Officer Tonna
 Barbara LoMoriello - Aide to Legislator Cooper
 Fred Pollert - Director/Budget Review Office
 Jim Spero - Deputy Director/Budget Review Office
 Kim Brandeau - Legislative Budget Analyst/Budget Review Office
 Brenda Rosenberg - County Executive's Assistant/IR
 Bonnie Godsman - County Executive's Office/IR
 Allen Kovesdy - Asst. Budget Director/County Executive's Office
 Ken Knappe - County Executive's Budget Office
 Kathy LaGuardia - County Executive's Budget Office
 Susan Hodosky - County Executive's Budget Office
 Dr. Clare Bradley - Commissioner/SC Department of Health Services
 Robert Maimoni- Administrator/Department of Health Services
 Len Marchese - Finance & Administration/Department of Health Services
 All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Alison Mahoney - Court Stenographer

(*The meeting was called to order at 4:00 P.M.*)

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

We're going to begin the meeting. Can we stand for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Caracciolo.

Salutation

Dr. Bradley, I guess it would be a good thing to have you come up.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

And we have Budget Review.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Can I make just a few comments? Okay. I would just like to repeat a comment that I made this morning in terms of Capital Projects and whether Capital Projects are bonded or not bonded, and our concern is more that they be rolled over from year-to-year because many of the Capital Projects are multi-year projects. We don't know how much we're going to spend necessarily in one year. When they're in operating we end up asking for a certain amount of money, then we don't spend it, then we need to re-ask for it the next year. So from our perspective, ignoring whether it's bonded or not bonded, we would like to have it within a roll over scenario so that the money can go from year-to-year because of dealing with consultants and RFP's and legal things through the County Attorney, that's just one point.

The other comment I would like to make is there is only one brand new Capital Project, and I would just like to spend a few minutes on that, and that is for addition or expansion of the Tri-Community Health Center. Over the last two years, we have had as one of our main agendas expansion and renovation of several of our health centers, the Brentwood Health Center, Martin Luther King, Shirley Health Center, the Southampton Health Center. We grew over the last five to ten years and our physical plants didn't grow at the same time, so over the last two years we have been modernizing and renovating our health centers, and our enrollment in our health centers has also grown.

The next health center that we would like to see expansion on is the Tri-Community Health Center in Amityville. Right now the facility has issues in terms of overcrowding. In the Tri-Community Health Center there is usually one patient room per provider and that's very inefficient, you like to have at least two or three rooms per provider so that maybe a nurse could be in one room getting a patient ready and then the doc could go from room to room; now some of the docs have to wait for the patients to be processed through the facility. So we would like to expand in terms of the number of rooms, we have been doing that at all of the other renovated facilities.

We also have staff sharing offices, and sometimes in a non clinical setting, there's information that is said and you want people to have private offices to talk to patients. So it would help in terms of confidentiality as well. We're asking for a 3,500 square foot addition for the Tri-Community Health Center.

Now, there are other Capital Projects, they're not new, they're ongoing, and myself and my staff are here to be able to answer questions, if you have them. Ask questions

LEG. CARACAPPA:

I have a question; after you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Go ahead, I will ask mine later.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Okay, just back to your opening statement. Were you able to change those resolutions we spoke about in the Health Committee so that they were filed in a timely fashion and we can vote on them through either a discharge or whatever process we're going to for the next meeting?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

There were two. One was for equipment --

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Right.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

-- and that one was changed and was sent off and that should be ready. The other one is for the computer project, and I think there is still some discussion at the Budget Review/County Exec level; maybe someone else from -- should be able to answer that. But I think it's still being worked on in terms of separating the computer project into the patient care IDX and the non patient care.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

So the equipment one --

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

The equipment is on its way.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

That's all squared away?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

That's all squared away.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

We will have to do a discharge?

MR. KNAPPE:

The health clinic resolution was done as a corrected copy within the eight day rule. The other one for the health computerization systems was done also on Friday. Victoria Siracusa brought down one other change that she wanted made to the resolution, which I just got a couple of hours ago, that we will get done today and file it back down to the Clerk's Office.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Does it need to be done in a timely fashion, will you do it through a CN come Tuesday or will you just refile it?

MR. KNAPPE:

That's -- we're going to be doing it as a corrected copy and that's something that maybe somebody from Brenda's Office would be able to address, from IR.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Okay, fine. And the other one you would like to see go on Tuesday.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Yes.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Through a discharge.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Yeah, the equipment; yes.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Dr. Bradley?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

You don't have the --

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Budget Review?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Oh, do you?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Yeah, I do. I have copies of the Budget Review Report, yet.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

There are some questions that Budget Review brings to our attention on page 214 --

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Hold on one second.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

-- regarding the health centers. And I would -- I think I just wanted to bring particular attention -- I agree with you, you know, having worked in the medical industry, that one exam room is absolutely inefficient and sharing, when you've got information that shouldn't be shared, is absolutely not acceptable, and they are talking about overcrowding and so forth. But then we get to number four on page 214 that, "A mental

health contract agencies has occupied three rooms of the overcrowded facility for over a decade and does not provide any compensation to the County for use of that space."

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

The mental health agency is Sunrise Psychiatric and actually, up until this year, they had six rooms. And we went to them about a year ago when we were computerizing our WIC Program and we needed dedicated rooms for WIC -- WIC was sharing with other providers -- and we went to them and said, "We have to have our rooms." And they pleaded with us that they did not have anywhere to go, that they had concerns that financially they weren't doing that well, if we did this to them it would cause them to go bankrupt. So being responsible not only for the medical side, I'm also responsible for the mental health side, so what we did was have a two phase approach; we took back three rooms with the goal that within a year they would give us back the other three rooms, and we're working with them with the State Office of Mental Health to help them with a new building that they're trying to move into.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Do you know when that will be done?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

I asked my Division Director for Mental Hygiene and he wasn't sure, he was going to contact the State to see where they were with that process. But our ultimate goal is for them to go out with the last three rooms.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Okay. And then number five, "Adequate parking is currently a problem and any expansion that infringes on the parking lot will" -- I think the word should be exacerbate the parking situation." It probably should be exacerbate, right?

MS. BRANDEAU:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

I thought maybe that was a new word.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Yeah. And this is an issue when we've done many of our expansions, parking is an issue. I think I would have to defer to Public Works in terms of when we look at the expansion and when we do the planning, is there some additional parking that we can get right there, and I can't answer that. I can't answer where we can look on site for some parking. There appears to be some space in the beginning of -- in the front of the building right on Sunrise and maybe some of that can be used to expand parking, but I don't know, I would have to defer to Public Works to look at that. And it's interesting, when we started Tri-Community had the biggest parking lot and it was never full. And now when you go you have to go to the very last spot.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Right.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

You know, it kind of just shows that enrollment is up. But that's

going to be an issue, we have to work that through with Public Works and Space.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

And then we go to whether or not it's going to be a second story, or do you have the plans?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

No. No, I don't.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

So if you go down further to number three, "The Health Department should complete a space assignment request for the proposed expansion"; are you working on doing that?

MR. MAIMONI:

Yes.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Yes. Yeah, we have; it's not complete but yes, we are working on that.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

What do you think of recommendation number one, that the 220,500 be moved to 2001 so that an expert analysis of the potential for expanding the facility may be conducted.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

That was our original request; I would be in favor of doing that.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

And the Construction Fund of one million be moved to 2002?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

I would be in favor of that also.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Madam Chair?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Go ahead.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

I guess just to cut to the chase, what recommendation from Budget Review do you not agree with?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

On this one I agree.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

That's the easy way to get to it.

MS. BRANDEAU:

For all the projects?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

No, on Tri-Community I agree with this.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Tri-Community.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Yes, this I agree with, we're on the same page.

MR. SPERO:

You must find something, something to disagree with.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

And other glaring differences that you may have in the report regarding Health Services?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Well, one issue is the Arthropod Borne Disease Laboratory. Right now we share space with Public Work's Division of Vector Control. And even prior to the West Nile episode last fall, we realized that we needed more space and more staffing and our needs were just exacerbated by West Nile. So we have -- we went out with an SAR request for expanded space.

Originally, we thought that we could go into a building right in the vicinity of where we are now which is the Public Works building, because didn't think that -- we thought there was some space that they weren't using, and as it turns out they have some space but not enough to meet our needs. So right now we are in three separate buildings; one is in where Vector Control is, one is kind of a garage-type area where we're holding mosquito traps, and then the other is in the materials building of Public Works. And what we need is larger space that is altogether, and I think our request is about 12 to 13,000. I don't --

MR. SPERO:

Thirteen.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Thirteen, and I don't think --

LEG. CARACAPPA:

5-25-5?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Page 218.

MS. BRANDEAU:

Two seventeen.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

And I think Budget Review thought that 5,000 would be adequate; I don't agree with that. It's going out -- at the recommendation of the Space Committee, it's going out for peer review, our SAR request for Vector Control is going out to some experts in the field, it's going to Stony Brook to have them take a look at it and some other people, so we're waiting those comments right now. But we don't think that we could get by with 5,000. We have refrigerators in the hall now, I mean, our space is grossly inadequate now. And we're going to be expanding surveillance; we'd like to do surveillance with ticks, we don't do any surveillance with ticks now. We have 800, 900 cases with Lyme Disease every year, we have Obisiosis, we have ehrlichiosis, and we wanted to do surveillance in terms of ticks.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Budget Review, do you have --

MR. SPERO:

Well, this peer review already answered some questions vis-a-vis the amount of space. The question is where are you going to get the space? And the only place where there's any space at the moment is in the old-- at the DPW lab where maybe some space could be made available for the department to use now, so we recommended putting a million dollars in to accomplish that goal. As far as the old Infirmary, that's several years away yet before anything will be available in that building, so. We just can't pull space out of the air.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

So we have kind of a temporary fix now between where we are with Vector Control, using the public works building and then a garage area. But I think we're looking two years down the road saying we need larger space altogether to deal with our surveillance and testing.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

What about the comment, "As an alternative, the department could explore leasing lab space from Brookhaven National Laboratory."

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

We could look at that, we haven't done that yet. I don't know if they have space that we could use.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Because that certainly would be an alternative here. So maybe we could --

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Sure, we'll explore that.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

We could ask you to do that.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Sure. I don't have a problem with that.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

One of the things that I noted throughout the section of health is that sometimes your requests are for one thing and then they are kind of put on to another thing.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Yeah. When we order equipment, it's usually for -- you will start the Capital Project early in a year for the next year and beyond, and over the last two years we have had major expansions and renovations of the health centers. So we put down on paper what we're going to need when we move into that facility, and for Brentwood it was twice the size of the old facility. And what has happened at times is we realize once we get in there that maybe we don't need that, there's a different need that we have. We will work to try to be more exact in terms of our request, but sometimes things will change. One piece of equipment will break down and we'll have to say, "Well, right now our need for is for that, we have to go ahead and get that." But when there is changes, we will alert everyone when we're going to be appropriating the money that it's different than the original proposal.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

One of the other things that I noted also was Touro College, sounds very much like the Coram Health Center landlord; can you tell me a little bit, or tell us a little bit about that?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

We have had issues in terms of the building. The biggest issue occurred last year during the summer with the air-conditioning being out, and it took a lot of meetings and discussions to come to resolution. It was a problem. I mean, that issue is resolved now.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Permanently resolved? I mean, are you going to have the same problem this summer?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

No. The air-conditioning issue, I believe is resolved. There was construction in terms of that problem, hopefully that won't be a recurrence. I mean, I can't guarantee, but we put in a permanent fix and unfortunately it was more towards the middle/end of the summer.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

So you don't foresee that the landlord will give us a problem? We do.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

I can't answer that. I mean, the air-conditioning is fixed now, it was a problem last summer.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Was it replaced, Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Yes, the whole system was replaced.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

The whole system?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

And so one of the recommendations here is, "Before Suffolk County considers entering into lease a agreement with Touro Law School For Court space in Central Islip, the Budget Review Office recommends that the Legislature's Ways & Means Committee investigate whether Touro is a responsive and responsible landlord." I guess we will go through that as the Coram has been.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Can I ask a question, Madam Chair?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Go ahead.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Jimmy, a question to you. Looking at Capital Project No. 4052, we're talking about vehicles. Your recommendation, and it's my recommendation too, that we always purchase vehicles of this type through operating funds; is that the case here, are they still requesting them through Capital? Page 218.

MR. MARCHESE:

That was DPW, ours were put in the Operating Budget with the Omnibus Resolution.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Okay. I think these are Public Works vehicles for Vector Control, not ours.

MR. SPERO:

The public works vehicle, yeah, that was interesting, there was no request made for those -- any replacement equipment for vector in the capital, so we assume it's going to be included in the Operating Budget request.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Where did this come from then, this Capital Project number?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

What page are you on?

LEG. CARACAPPA:

On 218, nine vehicles totaling \$201,000.

MS. BRANDEAU:

Funding was included in the Omnibus Resolution last year in the Operating Budget to provide vehicles for DPW.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Right.

MS. BRANDEAU:

And DPW needed two hundred and, I don't know, eighteen thousand dollars or something for vehicles, but we're only able to give them \$129,000 for vehicles, and those operating funds were included in the budget. Then what happened is this Capital Project was created during the year and it appropriated money for DPW to buy vehicles, the vehicles that we included operating funds for.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

In pay-as-you-go.

MS. BRANDEAU:

Right. So then the -- no, not pay as you go, in a DPW appropriation.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Just through operating, okay.

MS. BRANDEAU:

Yeah. So then the question becomes well, all right, so they bought these vehicles with the Capital funds, what about the \$129,000 in operating funds that DPW has, what are they going to do with that? And discussion came up that possibly the Health Department was going to be able to obtain vehicles with that. And I think we had discussed it with Kathy LaGuardia of the Budget Office, I don't know what happened after that.

MS. LaGUARDIA:

We are waiting for information from the Health Department now on their requirements. Len and I discussed it this morning and I am awaiting information.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

You're waiting for information?

MS. LaGUARDIA:

If the health -- what vehicles are required for the Health Department.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Can we go to the Martin Luther King, Jr., Health Center? It talks about expanding and then using the second floor as a storing area?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

That's on page 223.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Okay. Do you want me to just talk -- okay. I believe, I am not sure exactly when budget review went through. When they went through, certain parts of the expansion had not completely been done and there were still some punch lists where things had to be completed. Now, the health center has taken new pictures, if anyone cares to see them.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Well, you came prepared, that's good.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

I was only going to show them if I was asked. You know, this is the cafeteria which is currently being used. Medical records is better but the resolution that Legislator Caracappa asked about was to get some new medical record shelving and that's where we separated that out.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Right.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

We're going to -- it's improved from the pictures in the Budget Review Report, but we still need better shelving.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

These pictures are not of the second floor, though, right?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

The one with the chairs and the table?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Yeah?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

That is of the second floor.

MR. MAIMONI:

You will find correspondence to the ones that were in the report.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Right, this one. It doesn't look like the same room, but --

MR. MAIMONI:

This one here.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

That's the same room. That's the break room. I'm talking about this room.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Which one?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

The top picture on page 223, not the bottom picture.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Okay. That's the back storage room, okay. Yeah, that picture is on my desk, it still has storage in it, it doesn't look the way it does here.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

I'm not -- I've never been to this facility, but if the Good Samaritan Resident Program?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

That's not in the same building as the Martin Luther King, is it?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Yes. The Martin Luther King Health Center --

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

So you have a shortage of examining rooms and residents are seen waiting in the hallways and yet you have storage up; I mean, could it not be utilized?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

If you look at one of the pictures there with a gentleman sitting at a chair? That's the resident's room. A man with a white coat? That's where the residents -- is it there? It's not there, with the gentleman in a room at a desk?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Yes.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Here we go.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

That's the resident's room. And I think when they went through everything wasn't completed. Could it have been done a little quicker from when the construction was done? Possibly, but now things have been addressed.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

What about the X-ray table that came unbolted, has that been -- page two 223-D.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

I haven't seen it personally but I was told yes, that it was corrected, but I'll double check that. I don't have a picture of that, though, but I'll double check.

MR. MAIMONI:

There are certain maintenance items that have been addressed as a matter of course. On any given day in any County facility, you can find something that's broken that will be fixed within the next few days, and that's probably the case there.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

I guess I'm just concerned that, you know, when you visit -- and again, I think in the beginning I wanted to come visiting to all the health centers and I haven't had an opportunity to do that. But visiting the Coram Health Center and seeing-- and again, I didn't actually walk in to the health center, I just went into the other sections -- they aren't maintained properly. And you know, it's been kind of a question that I've had, to make sure that the people who are in charge of those particular health centers are making sure that the maintenance is done properly and that they are requesting it.

And if they're not, if they're requesting it and not getting results then, you know, something should be done, just, you know, the wall paper peeling off the walls and that kind of thing.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Many of our maintenance problems have been exacerbated by the crowding in the past, and where do you put things when you don't have anywhere to put people? In Martin Luther King, we had to use a closet as a nursing station for prenatal, and once the space expanded we have been able to expand out.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

There was a recommendation, page 229, John J. Foley Skilled Nursing Facility regarding the physical therapy expansion?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

And that Budget Review recommended reducing the 2002 construction funds by \$240,000 to reflect funding already appropriated for the physical therapy expansion.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

I don't have a problem with that.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Okay. Does anybody else have any questions?

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

No.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Not at the present time.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

The Central Islip Expansion Relocation.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

How are we going to address that one?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Well, we have been to -- in the past there were two space committees, now there is only one space committee. So we did go to the working space committee saying we have an overcrowding problem, we would like to look to address it. And we, I guess, fall with a group of proposed expansions that went to the working space committee and now need to go just to the one space committee, so that will be happening down the road. But we would like to be able to give a presentation about what the needs are for the patients that use that, why that facility is inadequate and kind of where we think the need is going forward.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Are we going to need -- I guess the question would be to Budget Review, whether you think that money should be deleted from the budget for the Central Islip expansion or relocation at this point?

MR. SPERO:

Yeah, that's been done in the resolution that's currently on the table.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

In that 1550 and 1551, okay.

MR. SPERO:

And ultimately we would have to replace that funding if the center is to be expanded.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Okay. And on the John J. Foley, I think I've wanted to meet with you about staffing needs.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

For the physical therapy? Okay. We projected that out for when the expansion is complete, it looks as if we're going to need about six, seven more people. But that won't happen this year or next year, it will happen once the expansion occurs. And if you compare that against the revenue that will come in when more physical therapy is being provided, the revenues about doubled the staffing costs. Physical therapy is a service that when you provide it in a skilled nursing environment your reimbursement goes up significantly. And what we found is over the last several years we have increased the number of general nursing home beds because we converted some HIV dedicated beds because there wasn't a need for long-term care for HIV at the same rate; we had 24 beds, we went to 12 and 12. Also, with the advent of the Adult Day Care Program, we found that those people that were coming to us were in need of physical therapy services as well. So the need for physical therapy grew significantly over the last couple of years. When we went into the new building, almost the day we went in the physical therapy area was not adequate to meet the needs of the residents in the John J. Foley.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Okay. Question on mammography van.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

It looks like it needs to be replaced, but is the proposed funding more than what's really needed?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

What page are you on; do you have a page number?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

I think page 240 and --

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

That there may have been some left over, is that the --

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

"To prevent unnecessary appropriations from being made, the Budget Review Office recommends that the Health Department obtain bid estimates for the van before the Legislature appropriates any funding for this project in 2001," and the one above it, "Funding included in the proposed Capital Program might be more than is needed to purchase the van desired."

MR. MAIMONI:

As a matter of course, we would go out to bid and come with the resolution.

MR. SPERO:

And then come for the appropriation.

MR. MAIMONI:

Yeah, and that's the way we've always done it.

MR. SPERO:

Okay.

MR. MAIMONI:

You know, BRO is recommending the normal procedure.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Yep.

MR. SPERO:

Not always, for you maybe.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Page 242, I guess, on the EMS/FRES Building, the building apparently is not in good condition?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

That's an under statement.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

That's the worst statement.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

It's in deplorable condition, does that sound better?

MR. MAIMONI:

It makes the Coram Health Center look good.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Wow, we'll have to go visit that one. But none of the appropriated \$100,000 for planning has been used yet?

LEG. CARACAPPA:

That's what we did back in 1996.

MR. SPERO:

That funding has never been used. And last year the Legislature took out funding to construct a new facility for the EMS Division and the money was used to put in for the renovations of the old Infirmary. It was our recommendation that after those renovations of the Infirmary are complete, EMS be moved into that facility.

LEG. CARACCILO:

What do you do about the existing building, though?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

When --

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Level it.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

My first goal is to find a new facility or do something for the EMS Division. When we realized it was going to take us some time, we had Public Works come in and do some temporary fix to the building, about a year, year and a half ago. They redid parts of the roof, they put up some new walls in the building, they did painting; within a very few number of months it was all back to the way it was originally again. It's very hard to do anything there that's going to last, I mean, so we need to act, to move quickly.

And my only concern about the old Infirmary, I didn't have a problem necessarily going there, is the time frame. You know, how long is it going to take to renovate the Infirmary?

MR. SPERO:

Well, planning funds were appropriated earlier this year, it will take at least a year to plan it and then probably two years to complete the renovations.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

What do you do in the meantime?

MR. SPERO:

Then what do you do in the meantime. Well, even if you built a new facility for EMS, you're still stuck with the same time frame.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

But, I mean, can they --

MR. SPERO:

That time frame is not going to change.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Can something go into the old building to make it at least better than it is now?

MR. SPERO:

The old building is going to be completely gutted.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

But I mean while we're waiting for the new -- whatever.

MR. SPERO:

You have to speak to DPW, see what sort of fixes they could make to the building just to keep it serviceable for the next few years.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

May I ask a question?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Go head.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

The \$110,000 that is budgeted for planning, I think it was Legislator Towle and myself that did that resolution back in 1996, '97, I think '97 -- i think it was '96, actually.

MR. SPERO:

Probably, it's back a few years.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Why wasn't it ever used, can anyone answer that?

MR. SPERO:

That I can't answer. I mean, the funds were appropriated and then there was no movement to accomplish anything.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

We did that on an emergency type of basis, that funding, so we can move the process along and after I and Fred went and viewed the facility, at that time there was a big hole in the front of the wall when a car drove through it and then it was just --

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Too bad it didn't go all the way through with nobody in the building.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

And that was right where the dispatchers were sitting. Why wasn't it done?

MR. MAIMONI:

Joe, we put in a request, this goes back two years ago, we wanted an extension to the FRES building at that time, that was our proposal.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Right.

MR. MAIMONI:

And that planning money was going to go, that you guys had appropriated, to start that process along. BRO comes out with a report that says, "We don't think it's appropriate to go there, we think we should be making use of the old Skilled Infirmary Building." Now, what you wind up with is you wind up with a grid lock here. You know, the departments involved, Public Works, ourselves, we want to go in one direction, we have a BRO report that says go in another direction, and I'm not going to get into who is right or wrong, you know, I can make an argument on either side of that; the fact is you just get grid lock and then nothing happens.

Our concern -- we're not Public Works, that's not our job and we don't try to get into that business. Our concern is for our employees. We have an unsafe condition here, we have mold growing on the walls, we have people who work there who go to work there every day, it's an inappropriate place for them. BRO, in good conscience, is making a recommendation to go to the Infirmary, that's fine. But by their own admission, it's three, four years down the road and we have employees who are working in an unsafe, unhealthy condition right now, we're looking for relief to that.

LEG. CARACCILO:

All right, let me ask the obvious question here. Nobody likes to get to the point in County government, nobody wants to accept responsibility. Who ultimately has that responsibility, part-time Legislators or somebody that's a department head?

MR. MAIMONI:

We're talking about the responsibility for the building.

LEG. CARACCILO:

Who ultimately has that responsibility for employee health and safety?

MR. MAIMONI:

If we're talking about --

LEG. CARACCILO:

Budget Review, the Commissioner, Public Works, who?

MR. MAIMONI:

We're talking about buildings, the way this place is currently configured, I would have to lay that at the feet of the building or the Space Committee, because you can't go -- you can't rent, you can't build, you can't do anything unless you get through that --

LEG. CARACCILO:

Bob, I appreciate that answer because --

MR. MAIMONI:

Unless you get through that Space Committee.

LEG. CARACCILO:

And I appreciate the answer because now we can go somewhere with the problem as elected officials,

personally I will bring that to the Space Committee attention the next time they meet, and by correspondence before they meet. Who chairs that committee?

MR. SPERO:

Charlie Bartha, the Commissioner of Public Works.

LEG. CARACCILOLO:

The Commissioner of Public Works, I thought so. So we will correspond with the Commissioner of Public Works and find out what the plan is to deal with this. We have lots of problems, lots of plans, but little action to take care of serious problems. We dealt with Cornell in a similar fashion. I heard Legislator Caracappa say, you know, this is probably the worst building in the County's inventory, I think it's a close second at Cornell Cooperative Extension; I mean, we have conditions like this there. I mean, somewhere the buck's got to stop, somebody's got the responsibility. And I don't think he's intentionally avoided dealing with the problem.

MR. MAIMONI:

Well, you know --

LEG. CARACCILOLO:

Yet somebody's got to make it a priority, somebody's got to --

MR. MAIMONI:

As you folks know probably better than us, when you're living in a committee environment it's very difficult, you know, committees are a lot more difficult to kind of -- if you say, "Maimoni's responsible for that," well, you got him, he can't -- well, it's a committee, it's not a person

LEG. CARACCILOLO:

Well, Commissioner Bradley has statutory responsibility for the health and welfare of the County residents under County Health Department jurisdiction, she does that and she does it well, you know, whether we're talking West Nile or any of the other recent health problems that, you know, we've been faced with, she's dealt with it, okay? The Commissioner of Public Works, he has enormous responsibilities, I mean, I don't know how many -- does anybody know how many buildings and structures we have in the County?

MR. SPERO:

Hundreds.

MR. MAIMONI:

Somewhere's around 400.

MR. SPERO:

Yeah, that's about right.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

About 400. Plus you have fleet, plus you have all kinds of things that he has responsibility for. So, I mean, somebody within that department, if not he, has to be in charge of following up on these very needy projects so that they don't fall through the cracks year after year after year.

MR. MAIMONI:

In fairness to the Commissioner, when we went to him about the repairs for the building, interim repairs for the building, he reacted quickly and appropriately.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

But that only was temporary.

MR. MAIMONI:

It was a temporary fix within the confines of budgetary constraints, in other words, you couldn't rebuild the building.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Okay. Understanding that, this is so frustrating because it's the same with Coram, and I'm sure with many of the buildings. The building you're in is maybe not appropriate, you need to be in another building or having, you know, additional space. But do we just ignore where we're at while we're waiting for new? I mean, is there some -- where do we go from here and how can we make this better? I mean, I'm looking at my notes here and none of the appropriated \$100,000 for planning has been used yet and I'm concerned about that; why?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Well, I think we need Public Works here to help with that part of it because they would be the ones that would do the planning. And, you know, we did the temporary fix because we thought it would get us over until either the wing was done off Probation, which it looks like the County is not going in that direction, and now it's the old Infirmary which is going to be a couple of years.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Right.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

So we could either go in every couple of months and try to redo the roof and put the walls up or we can, as we've been talking about recently, move the staff out of there.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Where?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Well, we'd have to go to the Space Committee and say, "We need" --

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

But that's the same problem, you still don't have a place.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Unless there's some vacant space somewhere in the County which I don't know about that maybe there is some vacant space for --

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

What I'm trying to say is maybe we should have a building service request detailing the needed repairs and make it more habitable, you know, for the employees. Again, the same problem I have is, and you just talked about it, you can't have employees coming to work every day with mold and you know -- go ahead.

MR. SPERO:

We're slated to move out of this building hopefully in the next few months.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Where?

MR. SPERO:

Across the street.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Oh, we meaning this.

MR. SPERO:

We meaning the Legislature.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Okay.

MR. SPERO:

So space possibly could be made available here once we move out

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

That would be wonderful.

MR. SPERO:

I mean, this is perfectly good space. That's a suggestion

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

That would be wonderful.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Well, Fred -- and in his absence, I'm sure you sit in for him at the Space Management Committee Meetings -- has this been broached yet about utilizing the space?

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Fred is here.

MR. SPERO:

We haven't discussed who's going to occupy the space after the Legislature leaves.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Well, maybe Fred can join the discussion and entertain us as to what is the plan, is there a plan to move County agencies into this building and what agencies and when?

MR. POLLERT:

That was a discussion at the last Space Committee Meeting. There apparently were some representations made when Steve Raptoulis was the County Executive's Representative. However, there is nothing firm at this point in time, therefore the understanding of the committee was that there has been no allocation of space in this building when we move out.

One of the things which is important is that there be adequate communications. There is good communications in the building, it's wired for both fiber as well as coaxial cable, so you could run a dispatch function out of here. It would be expensive to move them here --

MR. MAIMONI:

They don't dispatch.

MR. SPERO:

No dispatch, but EMS.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Yeah, FRES does that.

MR. POLLERT:

Right. So that they do have good communication out of here so that this could be a viable, temporary swing space. The problem is you have really hit the nail on the head, there is no good, comprehensive planning. The Sheriff's Department with respect to the Civil Division is probably in just as bad conditions as in this building, they're also waiting -- what was the testimony previously, they're also waiting to move into the Infirmary. The Quartermaster is all jammed up. There hasn't been a lot of long-term planning with respect to space, it's been more reactive; when the building starts to fall apart, gee, let's construct a new building and, frankly, that takes two to three years to take place.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Well, in your opinion, who should have that responsibility?

MR. POLLERT:

It should be part of the Space Committee, but the Space Committee only responds to space allocation requests coming out of departments, they're not proactive. They only respond when a request comes out

of department and then we try to shuffle them either into rented space or into County owned space.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Well, as I understand it --

MS. MAHONEY:

Can you use the microphone, please?

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Sure, I'm sorry. The members of the Space Management Committee are County employees such as yourself who have other primary responsibilities. Don't you think, given the amount of structures we have and infrastructure we have, that someone could assist the Commissioner of Public Works --

MR. POLLERT:

Yes.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

-- and plan ahead instead of just being, you know, reactive?

MR. POLLERT:

Yes.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Let's be proactive.

MR. POLLERT:

Years ago we used to have one registered architect, Jeff Martell, he used to handle space, or try to get a handle on space; there used to be a Working Space Committee, that hasn't met in probably the last like eight to nine months. So now the voting committee gets all of the detailed space requests and we only meet on a monthly basis.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Let me cut to the case.

MR. POLLERT:

Right.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Think about it. Prepare a resolution and we'll enact a Local Law that will put a mechanism in place to address these issues so that department heads and County employees and elected officials can meet the needs that the County has in terms of the office space and equipment without it being after the fact or, you know, on a piece meal basis as we're talking about here.

MR. POLLERT:

Yep.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

I think it's frustrating to -- you know, I have only been able to look at Coram, and now Legislator Caracappa is showing me some photographs of another building in really bad shape also and we're hearing testimony about other facilities, and this is just the Health Department. There has to be some kind of way in which maybe a person could be designated to walk through these buildings and just say, "There's a problem here."

MR. MAIMONI:

Legislator, Commissioner Bradley started that project with our department a couple of years ago. And while we're talking about our bad buildings at this moment in time, you know, the health department occupies 37 different buildings. If you go to the new Brentwood Health Center which was planned appropriately --

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

I did get to view that.

MR. MAIMONI:

It's a nice facility.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Beautiful.

MR. MAIMONI:

If you go to Tri-Community, if you go to Bay Shore which is part of that lease arrangement, and it's had its problems, you've heard about the air-conditioning.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Right.

MR. MAIMONI:

But there's a whole new HVAC system in there. We do a monthly report on all of our buildings on the status of their complaints and if they've been fixed or not and we send copies of that to the Space Management people as well as Public Works so that everybody is on board.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

So what happened with this building then?

MR. MAIMONI:

What happened with it? We started two years ago to say we had a problem and we went forward with a Capital Program request as to what that solution to that problem was from our perspective, but we don't set that policy, that's a policy that's set between --

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

So you asked for it but then it dropped somewhere. Okay, so I guess somebody needs to follow up.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Right. I think you didn't finish that sentence, that's policy set by whom?

MR. MAIMONI:

The Legislature sets the policy and when our request went forward, we were told -- or the report came out and said we don't recommend -- the County Executive recommended building that extension, it went to that Legislature, BRO said, "No, don't do that, let's make use of the Infirmary building," and that was two years ago the first time that recommendation was made.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Okay. But since that time, even that long ago there was an obvious need to address the problem. When you saw BRO make that recommendation, it would have been helpful to members of the Legislature if your office could have contacted us. So going forward, when situations like this hopefully don't repeat themselves --

MR. MAIMONI:

We made testimony before this committee two years ago on this issue.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

You did.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

I wasn't here.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Yeah, and I wasn't either.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

It was one year ago, neither of you were here.

MR. MAIMONI:

A year ago. So from our perspective, and I know it's not getting the building built, but from our perspective we're using the procedures that are in place to address the issue, and that would be come to our designated committee and tell them, we go back to the issue of a committee.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

And when it went from -- the proposal was going to go from an extension off of FRES to the old Infirmary, my only issue at that time was the time frame. I said, "I don't have a real problem with that, it's just that that's going to add a couple of years", building an extension would have been much quicker. And that's when we went to Public Works and said, "We've got to do something right now," and we did those modifications, but they only lasted a few months --

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Right.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

-- before it was raining in the building again. But if we could move in here -- I don't want to push you out or anything.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

How many square feet do you need?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Ten to 12 employees, it's a small group of people, so I'm sure there's more than adequate space.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

And how much space will be freed up in this building, Fred?

MR. POLLERT:

Roughly 8,000 square feet.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Does it say how much square feet is in that --

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

I read on the extension of 4,000 square feet, that was for FRES.

MR. MAIMONI:

There's only 12 employees but they also store --

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

The defribillators and other equipment, but --

MR. MAIMONI:

They have enormous equipment storage.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Yeah, but maybe we could --

MR. SPERO:

Maybe we can find some space downstairs someplace.

MR. POLLERT:

Yes, we've got two cellar levels here, two floors underneath this one.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Dr. Bradley, can you formally request some of those things now, at least to the Health Committee, and

then we will try to move forward with --

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Sure. You're talking about the EMS building; yes, absolutely. I would be happy to.

MR. MAIMONI:

Didn't we have an SAR filed?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Yeah, it's right -- yeah, we do.

MR. MAIMONI:

In addition to our --

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

To the Capital Project, yes, we have an SAR.

MR. MAIMONI:

-- Capital Request, we have a Space Assignment Request in to accommodate these folks.

MR. POLLERT:

Do we have that?

MR. SPERO:

I don't know. I'm supposed to get them but I don't think we have been getting them.

MR. POLLERT:

Do you know where they go?

MR. MAIMONI:

We send them to the Space Committee.

MR. POLLERT:

We don't get them.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Can you make sure that Budget Review gets those when you make those requests?

MR. MAIMONI:

They are members of the Space Committee.

MR. POLLERT:

But we don't receive them.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Can you make sure that they do receive them?

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Sure.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

By name, maybe? Okay, I have nothing further, I don't think; do you?

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

No.

CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:

Okay. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:

Thank you.

(*The meeting was adjourned at 4:49 P.M.*)

**Legislator Ginny Fields, Chairperson
Health Committee**

- Denotes Spelled Phonetically